

INTRODUCTION

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WHY SHOULD WE STUDY THEOLOGY?

1. Because true worship requires knowing the true God.

ROMANS 10:2-3

For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.³ Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

2. Because true discipleship requires us to pass on all that Jesus taught.

MATTHEW 28:19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

3. Because true mission requires proclamation of the true message of Jesus.

GALATIANS 1:6-9

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

WHAT ARE SOME PITFALLS IN DOING THEOLOGY?

1. Pride

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1b

But knowledge puffs up while love builds up.

2. Loss of mystery or denial of truth

DEUTERONOMY 29:29

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

3. Commitment to a man-made system

MARK 7:8

“You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

HOW DO I DO THEOLOGY WELL?

1. In worship

In discipleship

On mission

2. In tension

When the Scriptures clearly teach two truths (A and B) that appear to contradict each other, we do not choose one over the other or water down both. Rather we often stand between the two, affirming each and living with the tension that creates.

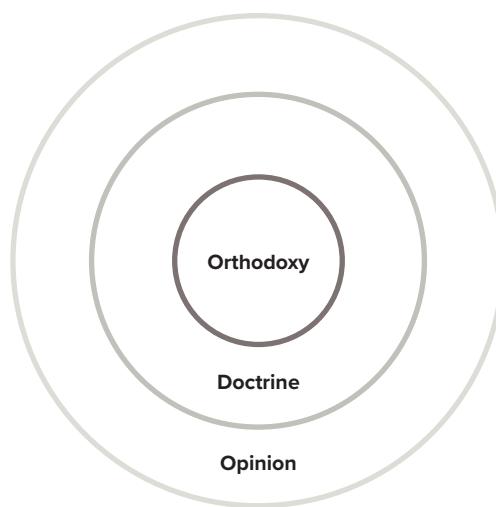


3. In the essentials *unity*

In the non-essentials *charity*

In all things *love*

Not all doctrines are the same. Different issues call for different responses:



- **Orthodoxy** Die for and Divide over
- **Doctrine** Debate and Defend
- **Opinion** Discuss

THE APOSTLES' CREED

(third—fourth centuries AD)

*I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried;
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting.
Amen.*